

Lombard language

Lombard (native name *lumbàart*, *lumbard* or *lombard*, depending on the orthography; pronounced [lũˈbaːrt] or [lomˈbart]) is a language^[7] belonging to the Cisalpine or Gallo-Italic group, within the Romance languages.^[8] It is a cluster of homogeneous varieties used by at least 3,500,000 native speakers in Northern Italy (most of Lombardy and some areas of neighbouring regions, notably the eastern side of Piedmont), Southern Switzerland (cantons of Ticino and Graubünden),^[8] and Brazil (Botuverá, Santa Catarina).^[4] The languages closest to Lombard are Franco-Provençal, French, Romansh, Occitan^{[9][10]} and Piedmontese.^[11]

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Origins

The most ancient linguistic substratum having left its mark on this language is that of the ancient Ligures.^{[12][13]} Available information about this variety is extremely vague and limited.^{[12][13]} This is in sharp contradistinction to the picture that can be drawn about the group which replaced the Ligures, the Celts.^[14] Contributions from the Celts to local languages were self-

Lombard	
<i>lombard/lumbaart</i> (WL) <i>lombard</i> (EL)	
Native to	Italy, Switzerland
Region	Italy: ^{[1][2][3]} Lombardy Piedmont South Tyrol Trentino Switzerland:^{[1][2][3]} Grisons Ticino Brazil:^[4] Santa Catarina
Native speakers	3.9 million (2002) ^[5]
Language family	Indo-European - Italic - Romance - Western Romance - Gallo-Romance - Gallo-Italic Lombard
Dialects	Western Lombard Eastern Lombard
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	lmo
Glottolog	lomb1257 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/lomb1257) ^[6]
Linguasphere	51-AAA-oc & 51-AAA-od

evident, so that Lombard language is still classified as a Gallo-Romance language (from ancient Romans name for Celts, Gauls).^[12]

Roman domination shaped dialects spoken in ancient Lombardy, such that lexicon and grammar of this language find their origin in the Latin language.^[14] This influence was not yet homogeneous;^[12] idioms of different areas were influenced by previous linguistic substrata and each area was marked by a stronger or weaker characterisation in comparison to Ligure or ancient Celtic languages.^[12]

The Lombardic language left clear traces too, as it was the variety spoken by Longobards, a Germanic population which dominated a large section of Italy, including Lombardy, after the fall of the Western Roman Empire. Lombardic had acted as a linguistic superstratum over Lombard, since the Longobards did not impose their language on the population. Lombardic left traces without Germanicising the local language, such that Lombard preserved its Romance nature.^[15]

Status

Lombard is considered a minority language, structurally separate from Italian, by Ethnologue and by the UNESCO Red Book on Endangered Languages (http://www.helsinki.fi/~tasalmin/europe_ind ex.html). However, Italy and Switzerland do not recognize Lombard speakers as a linguistic minority. In Italy this is the same as for most other minority languages,^[16] which are normally considered Italian dialects - despite the fact that they belong to different subgroups of the Romance language family, and their historical development is not derived from Italian.^[17]

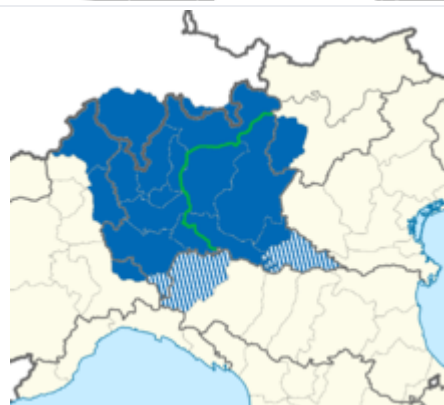
Speakers

Historically, the vast majority of Lombards spoke only Lombard.^[18]

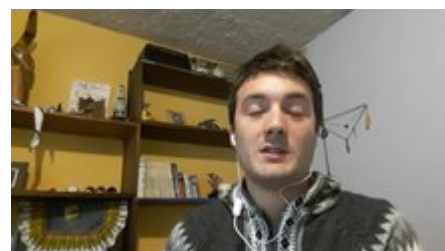
With the rise of Standard Italian throughout Italy and Switzerland, one is not likely to find wholly monolingual Lombard speakers, but a small minority may still be uncomfortable speaking the dominant Italian. Surveys in Italy find that all Lombard speakers also speak Italian, and their command of each of the two languages varies according to their geographical position as well as their socio-economic situation. The most reliable predictor was found to be the speaker's age: studies have found that young people are much less likely to speak Lombard as proficiently as their grandparents did.^[19] In fact, in some areas, elderly people are more used to speaking Lombard rather than Italian, even though they know the latter as well as the former.

Classification

Lombard belongs to the Cisalpine or Gallo-Italic group of languages, which shares features with Gallo-Romance languages and other Western Romance languages.^[20]



Lombard-speaking areas in blue, with transition dialects between Lombard and Emilian in a lighter shade. The green line marks the passage from Western to Eastern varieties.



Play media

A young man speaking Eastern Lombard (vocabulary influenced by the Italian language)

Varieties

The varieties of the Italian provinces of Milan, Varese, Como, Lecco, Lodi, Monza and Brianza, Pavia and Mantua belong to Western Lombard, and the ones of Bergamo, Brescia and Cremona are dialects of Eastern Lombard. All the varieties spoken in the Swiss areas (both in canton Ticino and canton Graubünden) are Western, and both Western and Eastern varieties are found in the Italian areas.

The varieties of the Alpine valleys of Valchiavenna and Valtellina (province of Sondrio) and upper-Valcamonica (province of Brescia) and the four Lombard valleys of the Swiss canton of Graubünden, although they have some peculiarities of their own and some traits in common with Eastern Lombard, should be considered Western. Also, dialects from the Piedmontese provinces of Verbano-Cusio-Ossola and Novara, the Valsesia valley (province of Vercelli), and the city of Tortona are closer to Western Lombard than to Piedmontese.

Literature

The Lombard variety with the oldest literary tradition (from the 13th century) is that of Milan, but now Milanese, the native Lombard variety of the area, has almost completely been superseded by Italian from the heavy influx of immigrants from other parts of Italy (especially Apulia, Sicily, and Campania) during the fast industrialization after the Second World War.

Ticinese is a comprehensive denomination for the Lombard varieties spoken in Swiss Canton Ticino (Tessin), and the *Ticinese koiné* is the Western Lombard koiné used by speakers of local dialects (particularly those diverging from the *koiné* itself) when they communicate with speakers of other Lombard dialects of Ticino, Grigioni, or Italian Lombardy. The koiné is similar to Milanese and the varieties of the neighbouring provinces on the Italian side of the border.

There is extant literature in other varieties of Lombard, for example *La masséra da bé*, a theatrical work in early Eastern Lombard, written by Galeazzo dagli Orzi (1492–?) presumably in 1554.^[21]

Usage

Standard Italian is widely used in Lombard-speaking areas. However, the status of Lombard is quite different in the Swiss and Italian areas, such that the Swiss areas have now become the real stronghold of Lombard.

In Switzerland

In the Swiss areas, the local Lombard varieties are generally better preserved and more vital than in Italy. No negative feelings are associated with the use of Lombard in everyday life, even with complete strangers. Some radio and television programmes, particularly comedies, are occasionally broadcast by the Swiss Italian-speaking broadcasting company in Lombard. Moreover, it is common for people from the street to answer in Lombard in spontaneous interviews. Even some television ads in Lombard have been reported. The major research institution working on Lombard dialects is located in Bellinzona, Switzerland (*CDE - Centro di*



The LSI, published in 2004

dialettologia e di etnografia, a governmental (cantonal) institution); there is no comparable institution in Italy. In December 2004, the CDE released a dictionary in five volumes, covering all the Lombard varieties spoken in the Swiss areas.^[22]

In Italy

Today, in most urban areas of Italian Lombardy, people under 40 years old speak almost exclusively Italian in their daily lives because of schooling and television broadcasts in Italian. However, in periferic Lombardy (Valtellina, Lake Como, Bergamo, Brescia, Lodi), Lombard is still vital.

That is from a number of historical and social reasons: its usage has been historically discouraged by Italian politicians, probably as it was regarded as an obstacle to the attempt to create a 'national identity'.

Now, the political party most supportive of Lombard (and of the varieties of Northern Italy in general) is the Northern League (in the past, on the other hand, the leftist parties were the ones giving support to local varieties). Thus, speaking a dialect of some minority languages might be politically controversial in Italy.

A certain revival of the use of Lombard has been observed in the last decade, when the use of Lombard has become a way to express one's local identity and to distance oneself from Roman-oriented mainstream Italian culture. The popularity of modern artists singing their lyrics in some Lombard dialect (in Italian *rock dialettale*, the best-known of such artists being Davide Van de Sfroos) is also a relatively new but growing phenomenon involving both the Swiss and Italian areas.

Phonetics

The following tables show the sounds used in all dialects of Lombard.

Consonants

Consonant phonemes^[23]

		Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Post-alveolar	Palatal	Velar
Nasal		<u>m</u>			<u>n</u>		<u>ɲ</u>	(ŋ)
Stop	voiceless	<u>p</u>		<u>t</u>				<u>k</u>
	voiced	<u>b</u>		<u>d</u>				<u>g</u>
Affricate	voiceless				<u>ts</u>	<u>tʃ</u>		
	voiced				<u>dz</u>	<u>dʒ</u>		
Fricative	voiceless		<u>f</u>		<u>s</u>	<u>ʃ</u>		
	voiced				<u>z</u>	<u>ʒ</u>		
Trill					<u>r</u>			
Approximant	central		<u>ʋ</u>				<u>j</u>	<u>w</u>
	lateral				<u>l</u>		(ʎ)	

In Eastern Lombard, /dz/, /z/ and /ʒ/ are merged to [z], and /ts/, /s/ and /ʃ/ to [s]. The latter sound is often further debuccalized to [h].

Vowels

Vowel phonemes^[23]

	Front		Central	Back
	Unrounded	Rounded		
High	<u>i</u> <u>i:</u>	<u>y</u> <u>y:</u>		<u>u</u> <u>u:</u>
Mid	<u>e</u> <u>e:</u>	<u>ø</u> <u>ø:</u>		<u>o</u>
	<u>ɛ</u>			<u>ɔ</u>
Low			<u>a</u> <u>a:</u>	

While in Western varieties vowel length is contrastive (e.g. Milanese *andà* "to go" vs *andàa* "gone"),^[23] it is not in Eastern ones, that normally use short allophones.

When there are two repeating orthographic vowels that are separated by a dash, it is to avoid them being confused with the long vowel, such as *a-a* in *ca-àl* "horse".^[23]

Western long /a:/ and short /ø/ tend to be back [ɑ:] and lower [œ], respectively. /e/ and /ɛ/ may merge to [ɛ].

See also

- Diachronics of plural inflection in the Gallo-Italian languages
- Emiliano-Romagnolo
- Gallo-Italic of Sicily
- La Spezia–Rimini Line
- Languages of Europe
- Ligurian language (Romance)
- List of languages in Europe
- Piedmontese
- Pierre Bec
- Romance plurals
- Venetian language

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External links

- Far Lombard (<http://www.lengualombarda.org/440114785>) This Lombard language association website is a place where you can learn lombard through texts and audio visual materials.
- Lombard language digital library (<https://www.lingualombarda.it/index.php>)
- Learn Lombard online (<https://web.archive.org/web/20100617174127/http://www.orbilat.com/Languages/Lombard/>)
- Learn Lombard Italian site (<https://it.wikibooks.org/wiki/Insubre/Copertina>)
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- Repubblica e Cantone Ticino (<https://web.archive.org/web/20060101003809/http://www.ti.ch/decs/dc/cde/temi/documentiorali.asp>) Documenti orali della Svizzera italiana. (in Italian)
- Istituto di dialettologia e di etnografia valtellinese e valchiavennasca (<http://associazioni.provincia.so.it/idevv/>).
- LSI - Lessico dialettale della Svizzera italiana (<https://web.archive.org/web/20051123045803/http://www.ti.ch/decs/dc/cde/temi/lessico.asp?menu=11>).
- RTSI: Acquarelli popolari (<https://web.archive.org/web/20050305060240/http://www.rtsi.ch/scrittori/>), some video and audio documents (interviews, recordings, etc. of writers from Ticino) in Ticinese varieties (please notice that the metalanguage of this site is Italian, and that some of the interviews are in Italian rather than in Ticinese Lombard).
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- Lombard basic lexicon at the Global Lexicostatistical Database (<http://starling.rinet.ru/cgi-bin/response.cgi?root=new100&morpho=0&basename=new100\ier\rom&first=0>)

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